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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

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U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Subject: "HOME-CANNING OF MEATS AND CHICKEN." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

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"Please don't push! Please don't crowd! Kindly step back into line," as the floor-walker says at the bargain sales. But I won't blame you a bit if you rush for a pen and postcard when you hear the news for today. In a way, I almost feel as if I were announcing the year's best bargain sale. At least, I'm announcing something that has to do with the big job of saving money on the food bill.

In other words, ladies, the Bureau of Home Economics of the U. S. Department of Agriculture announces a new edition of its bulletin on home canning. This new edition not only gives directions for canning fruits and vegetables but also the latest information on canning meats and chicken. It also has up-to-date information on home-canning equipment, and directions for canning several different kinds of food such as meat specialties and hominy and sauer kraut that were not in the earlier editions. If you are going to do any canning late this fall, if you are going to can meat at butchering time, or put up the last of the fall fruits and vegetables -- well, here's the most reliable guide I know. If you want the complete title of this publication to order by, here it is: "Home Canning of Fruits, Vegetables and Meats." And its number is 1762. How do you get a copy? By writing to the U. S. Department of Agriculture at Washington, D. C., and asking for one. You'll get one, as long as the free supply lasts.

Although the fruit and vegetable canning season is about over in most parts of the country, the new sections of the bulletin will be useful now for canning chickens and for putting up beef, pork and other meats later on. Many poultry flocks still include hens that were not culled out during the summer when most of the nonlayers are usually disposed of, and these provide the best meat for canning. They are hens about 2 years old which on the market sell as "fowl" or "stewing" chickens. They have much more meat than young chicken, and the canning process because of its long cooking makes the meat tender. In fact, the young tender chicken meat from broilers or fryers, which is so good when cooked and served immediately, is not so good in either flavor or texture when canned as this older meat.

Canning investigations in the Bureau of Home Economics and elsewhere have all proved one fact -- that all meat canning must be done in a pressure cooker for safety. Neither a boiling-water bath, nor a steamer, nor an oven will do, for none of these can heat the meat above the boiling point; yet a

higher temperature than boiling is necessary to make sure of killing the spoilage bacteria which may cause food poisoning. For safety, use the pressure canner, and process canned meats and chicken at 250 degrees Fahrenheit. Without a pressure canner, better not try to can meat at all. You can preserve it in some other way -- by drying, perhaps, or salting or smoking.

I don't need to mention to you, of course, that all chickens and all meat animals intended for canning should be slaughtered and handled in the most sanitary way possible. Then, unless you can the meat at once, it should be thoroughly chilled. Otherwise decomposition will set in within a few hours. Investigators find that freezing meat is not so satisfactory as chilling it for canning.

As for the utensils to use, enamelware, aluminum, retinned metal or stainless steel are best. Avoid copper or iron because they discolor the meat. And never let meat even lie in contact with galvanized iron over 300 minutes or it may take up harmful quantities of zinc. As for wooden utensils and wooden working surfaces, they need special care in cleaning to be free of harmful bacteria. Scrub them with soapy water to remove all grease, and then rinse in boiling water. If you use such wooden utensils for several days at a stretch in canning, disinfect them with hypochlorite solution -- either calcium or potassium or sodium hypochlorite -- after scrubbing and scalding.

As for the containers for canning meat and chicken, the foods people advise using plain tin cans or glass jars. They say that chicken is more likely to discolor than other meats in tin cans, and they say that sometimes the can may leave a deposit on the chicken itself. But their investigations show that discoloration is reduced to the minimum if you pack the chicken hot, and if you leave proper headspace in the containers.

The most suitable size of containers for meat and poultry are No. 2 and No. 2 and a half tin cans, and pint glass jars. If you use larger sizes, they will need much heavier processing and the product is less likely to be good.

Listeners, those are just a few pointers that you will find among many in the new canning bulletin. All the information in the bulletin is backed up by the long investigation of home canning methods which has been going on at the Bureau of Home Economics. This new publication will bring you up to the minute on safe and successful ways of putting up farm and garden products. It is a contribution from the Bureau of Home Economics to the women in homes all over the country who provide healthful meals for their family the year around -- and provide them at a great saving in cost -- by canning home grown foods each summer and fall.

Once more, the new bulletin is called "Home Canning of Fruits, Vegetables, and Meats." And it is Farmers' Bulletin No. 1762. You get your copy by writing to the Department of Agriculture at Washington, D. C.

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